

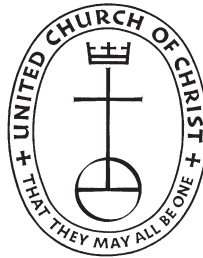
Student in Care of Association

Section 2 of 10

United Church of Christ

MANUAL ON MINISTRY

Perspectives and Procedures for
Ecclesiastical Authorization of Ministry



Parish Life and Leadership Ministry
Local Church Ministries
A Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ

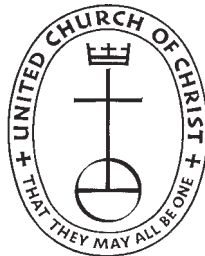
Student in Care of Association

Section 2 of 10

United Church of Christ

MANUAL ON MINISTRY

Perspectives and Procedures for
Ecclesiastical Authorization of Ministry



Parish Life and Leadership Ministry
Local Church Ministries
A Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ

STUDENT IN CARE OF ASSOCIATION

Section 2 of 10

United Church of Christ

Manual on Ministry

Perspectives and Procedures for Ecclesiastical Authorization of Ministry

Manual on Ministry is published in ten separate sections or booklets. Each section is available separately or as part of the complete *Manual* that includes all ten sections in a single binder. The ten sections are:

1. Partners in Authorizing Ministry

An overview of the covenantal relationships and underlying assumptions about authorized ministry, including the ministerial codes.

2. Student in Care of Association

Commentary, processes, and procedures for those preparing to enter the Ordained Ministry of the United Church of Christ.

3. Ordained Ministry

Commentary, processes, and procedures for Ordained Ministry, including Ordained Ministerial Standing.

4. Dual Standing and Privilege of Call

Commentary, processes, and procedures for those ordained ministers of denominations other than the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) who seek to serve in the United Church of Christ or who seek to enter the Ordained Ministry of the United Church of Christ. Ordained ministers of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) should see section 5, "Ordained Ministerial Partner."

5. Ordained Ministerial Partner

Commentary, processes, and procedures related to the reconciliation of ministries with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

6. Commissioned Ministry

Commentary, processes, and procedures for Commissioned Ministry, including Commissioned Ministerial Standing.

7. Licensed Ministry

Commentary, processes, and procedures for Licensed Ministry.

8. The Oversight of Ministries Authorized by the United Church of Christ

Commentary, processes, and procedures for the nurture and accountability of the ministries of the Church.

9. Ecclesiastical Endorsement

Commentary, processes, and procedures for those seeking to serve as chaplains in professional organizations and military or other U.S. government agencies.

10. Supplemental Materials

Commentary, appendices, and a glossary related to multiple sections of *Manual on Ministry*.

STUDENT IN CARE OF ASSOCIATION CONTENTS

Constitutional Provisions	1
Bylaws Provisions	1
Introduction	1
Who Can Be in Care of An Association?	2
Commentary	3
Person and Local Church (Steps 1–5)	3
Initial Processing by the Association Committee on the Ministry (Steps 6–8)	5
The Role of the Student in Care Advisor (Steps 9–10)	8
Annual Review (Step 11)	10
Begin Ordination Procedures (Step 12)	11
Non-Transferability of in Care	11
Student in Care Chart	12
The Church’s Expectations of Its Applicants for Student in Care	18

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION

26. A Student in Care of Association is a member of the United Church of Christ who has been called by God and who, under the care of the member's Association, is preparing for the ordained Christian ministry.

STUDENT IN CARE OF ASSOCIATION

BYLAW PROVISIONS

101. A person desiring to prepare for the ordained ministry applies to be received as a Student in Care of Association. Application is made to the Association through the student's pastor and the Local Church of which the student is a member.

102. The Committees on the Ministry of the student's Conference and Association cooperate in examining the applicant with respect to fitness, aptitudes, Christian experience, and commitment. If found to be qualified, the applicant is received into the care of his or her Association. A student is expected to be in care for at least one year prior to ordination.

103. The Association extends fellowship, counsel, and assistance to the student during the time of the student's academic preparation for the ministry. The student is responsible to the Association.

104. A student preparing for the ordained ministry is expected to pursue a course of study leading to a bachelor's degree, or its equivalent, and a Master of Divinity degree, or its equivalent, from a theological seminary approved by Local Church Ministries.

163. An Association receives under its care students for the ordained ministry and extends to them fellowship, counsel, assistance, and supervision during their academic preparation.

INTRODUCTION

A student in care of an Association is a member of the United Church of Christ who has been called by God and who, under the care of the member's Association, is preparing for the ordained Christian ministry.

In care is the relationship that exists between a student preparing for ordination, his or her local church, and his or her Association. The purpose of the in care relationship is to provide support, counsel, and assistance to the student during the time of the student's academic preparation for the ordained ministry. A person is expected to be in care for a least one year prior to ordination.

The in care relationship is designed to facilitate preparation for ordained ministry. Preparation is commonly understood to mean completing a course of study at an accredited college and seminary. Any seminary fully accredited by the Association of Theological Schools is considered to be a seminary approved by Local Church Ministries. Each person seeking ordination also needs to identify and fully understand other-than-scholastic competencies and skills required to fulfill effectively the functions of ordained ministry and to make concrete plans to acquire these competencies and skills. (See "The Church's Expectations of Its Applicants for Student in Care" at the end of this section of *Manual on Ministry*.)

Those preparing to minister in the United Church of Christ need to understand the identity of the United Church of Christ by learning its history, theological roots, and polity. Another aspect of preparation for responsible ministry is participation, in as full a sense as possible, in the life of the United Church of Christ—locally, in the Association and Conference, and in denominational structures and activities.

To be in care is to be in a covenantal relationship—one that involves the individual with the local church and the Association. Since it is a relationship, it is characterized by communication, trust, promises, and shared experiences. One does not simply relate to the local church or Association but to persons who act on behalf of those bodies.

Given the traditional emphasis on an educated clergy, the majority of United Church of Christ ordained ministers have acquired both a college and seminary degree, and the in care relationship has been defined primarily in terms of students. However, persons seeking ordination in the United Church of Christ who have not been students enrolled in a seminary or educational institution also have benefited from similar in care relationships. Whether the candidate is attending an educational institution or not, she or he will have more information and support for decisions concerning ordination when an in care relationship has been developed. Association Committees on the Ministry will need to be familiar with the section of this *Manual on Ministry* on “educational equivalency” (see Appendix A in the supplemental section of this *Manual*) in evolving their policies and practices in regard to persons in special situations who do not take the usual college and seminary route or preparation for ordination.

A student in care has an ongoing relationship with the denomination through persons who are responsible for maintaining standards for ordained ministry and who act as role models and advisors. A student in care may benefit from peer relationships, one-to-one counsel and instruction, and financial assistance; the Association benefits from the relationship by getting to know the leaders of the future and by ensuring their preparedness and competency.

WHO CAN BE IN CARE OF AN ASSOCIATION?

All persons who are members of the United Church of Christ and who understand themselves to have been called by God to a particular form of ministry, persons who are in the process of learning the possible ways of living out such a call, and persons who are preparing themselves for ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ are required to participate in the in care procedures. Those preparing for a wide variety of ordained ministries, including, but not limited to, ordained ministry in a local church, benefit from this relationship. The applicant, through his or her local church and pastor, takes the initiative.

PERSON AND LOCAL CHURCH

COMMENTARY STEPS 1–5

The local church and its pastor play a variety of roles in relation to students in care. Local churches are primary places where persons are nurtured in the Christian faith, hear the call of God to ministry, and make decisions about the specific forms their ministries will take. Pastors and lay leaders are significant persons in helping members identify and claim their gifts for ministry. As these leaders discern within members the gifts for ordained ministry, they should nurture, encourage, challenge, and guide these persons. The quality of the ordained leadership of the United Church of Christ is dependent on the sensitive work of pastors and lay leaders in identifying and nurturing members who have the gifts and potential for this form of ministry.

While maintaining a sensitivity to the way in which the Spirit of God may be working in the lives of persons to call them to ordained ministry, pastors and lay leaders also should play an important role in ensuring that persons who are considering ordained ministry have the potential for this form of ministry.

While supporting members as they grapple with decisions about ministry, pastors and lay leaders should educate members about the nature of the ministry of all Christians and of some, including commissioned and licensed ministry as well as ordained ministry. Pastors and lay leaders will challenge, encourage, and support some persons toward ordained ministry, because they discern the gifts and potential of these persons for this ministry. But pastors and lay leaders also may discourage some other persons because they do not discern within these persons the necessary gifts and potential for ordained ministry. Or, if the ministry to which these persons feel called is not one requiring ordination, these leaders also may decide that these persons should be encouraged to pursue other forms of ministry.

When a member of the United Church of Christ desires to prepare for ordained ministry, the *Manual* calls for a deliberative process in which a committee, consisting of the pastor and representatives of the local church, sits down with the member to thoroughly explore this decision. This committee then determines if the local church and pastor will recommend the person to the Association for in care. The local church will need to decide on the appropriate group to represent it in these conversations—governing board, deacons, consistory, church and ministry committee, or other.

It is recommended that the pastor or a lay leader of the local church notify the Association Committee on the Ministry that one of the members of this local church is considering applying for student in care status and request any guidance the Committee on the Ministry can give in preparing the application.

In preparation for the meeting with the local church committee, the person prepares and provides specified written materials. (See step 3 in the Student in Care Chart.) Included in this material will be a narrative account of the person's life pilgrimage, with a description of the people and experiences that have contributed to the person's sense of call to ordained ministry and a description of how the call is understood at this time. Also, the

person will provide documentation of her or his formal education or its equivalent and the educational plans the person has made to prepare for ordained ministry.

During the interview, the local church committee will explore some or all of the following with the person:

- The person's history with the local church and level of participation. How has the person's experience in the local church, as well as in other settings of the Church, contributed to his or her sense of call to ordained ministry? How has his or her participation in the local church given evidence that this person has the gifts and maturity necessary for ordained ministry? If the person is a relatively new member or has had very minimal participation in the life of a local church, the committee should explore carefully the factors that have contributed to the person's sense of call and the person's understanding of the Church and the responsibilities of church membership.
- The person's understanding of ordained ministry. Does the person have a realistic view of ordained ministry, the Church's expectations of its ordained ministers, and the types of ministries engaged in by ordained ministers? Is another form of ministry more suited to the person's gifts and interests?
- The requirements and procedures for the preparation for ordination. Does this person understand the educational requirements needed—bachelor's degree and Master of Divinity degree—and the need for an in care relationship? The committee needs to be clear with the person that the decision to enter into the in care relationship does not automatically lead to ordination. There will be many additional decision points along the way on which the person and the Church must decide if this person should be ordained.

The committee and pastor, on behalf of the local church, then decide whether or not to recommend the person to the Association to be received as a student in care. Of course, a local church would have to have serious reservations in order not to recommend a person. If the church does have reservations about the person, it will be important to share those both with the person and with the Association Committee on the Ministry as part of its recommendation.

In recommending that the person be received in care of the Association, the local church is committing itself to a lengthy supportive relationship with the person during the years of preparation for ordination. Once the person is received in care, the local church will need to decide how it will continue to relate to and support the person. College and seminary educations are very expensive, and the local church will want to consider its ability to assist the student financially. The local church will need to remain in close relationship with the person so that it is prepared to recommend ordination when the person has completed all of the preparation requirements.

Normally, persons are recommended for in care as early in their preparation as possible but usually not earlier than the beginning of their college preparation. Prior to college, persons who are considering ordained ministry should be nurtured and guided by their local church and pastor and assisted to seek in care when they begin college.

The local church accompanies its letter of recommendation to the Association Committee on the Ministry with the following documentation, some of which it secures from the person:

- a letter of application from the person to the Association to be received as a student in care.
- a letter verifying the person's membership in the local church and the length of time the person has been a member of the United Church of Christ.
- three letters of reference, including one from a pastor of that local church.
- the background material the person provided the local church committee, revised if necessary, including the person's life pilgrimage, understanding of call, and formal education.
- a description of the process used by the local church to interview and recommend the person.

INITIAL PROCESSING BY THE ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE ON THE MINISTRY

STEPS 6–8

The first step of the Association in the in care process is to receive and consider the application of a member of a local church of the Association to become a student in care of the Association and the local church's recommendation in support of the application. The local church is required to accompany the request with specified documentation about the person (described above). The Committee on the Ministry needs to provide time on its agenda to review these materials and determine whether or not to proceed with the request. In most cases the decision to proceed is made if the documentation provided is complete and provides a basis for an interview with the person. If the necessary materials are not complete, the Committee may request further documentation before proceeding.

Throughout the interview, the Committee on the Ministry is seeking to determine the person's fitness, aptitudes, Christian experience, and commitment as a basis for preparing for ordained ministry (Bylaw 102). It may utilize "The Church's Expectations of Its Applicants for Student in Care," following the Student in Care Chart. The Committee also may utilize the resources of a career counseling service that offers testing to determine readiness to prepare for ordained ministry.

A sample interview agenda follows:

- Introduction of the person, representatives of the local church, members of the Committee on the Ministry, and any others who may be present.

- A time of prayer or worship.
- A statement about the purpose of the meeting and preview of the agenda.
- A statement by the pastor or lay leader about the person, including information about the person's history with and involvement in the local church, the process the local church went through to recommend the person to the Association, and the rationale for the local church's recommendation.
- A statement by the person that includes sharing his or her life pilgrimage, those factors that have led to the decision to prepare for ordained ministry, and plans for this preparation.
- Discussion by the Committee with the person about questions or issues raised by the person's statement or by any of the written materials provided by the person.
- Description and interpretation by the Committee of its student in care procedures and the expectations it has of its students in care. The Committee will emphasize the important role of the student in care advisor and the responsibility of the student in care to relate closely with his or her advisor. The Committee also will emphasize the fact that the decision to grant student in care status does not ensure that the person will be ordained. In care is the beginning of a process that sets the stage for developmental tasks leading to several decision points about the person's fitness and preparedness for ordained ministry.
- Discussion of the selection of a seminary including the necessity that it be a seminary approved by Local Church Ministries. It should be noted that seminaries related to the United Church of Christ provide significant opportunities for understanding of and incorporation into the ethos of the United Church of Christ; thus, they should receive strong consideration in the selection process.
- Closure, including a statement by the Committee to the person about next steps.

Following the interview, the Committee on the Ministry deliberates and makes its decision. At this point, it is making a decision about the person's potential fitness for ordained ministry. Is there a reasonable expectation that with the proper preparation the person can meet the requirements for ordination and can function as an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ?

The decision of the Committee may take one of several forms:

- "Yes." The Committee senses that this is a person with gifts for ordained ministry, an authentic call to ministry, and the ability and determination to meet the requirements for ordination.
- "Yes, but . . ." The Committee senses that the applicant may have the potential for ordained ministry, but it has certain reservations or concerns that must be addressed. These may have to do with a

perceived lack of maturity in the person, a deficient understanding of ministry, questions about the person's ability to secure the necessary educational credentials, and so on. In this case, the Committee will need to share its reservations with the applicant and determine together steps to be taken to address these reservations and checkpoints along the way to reassess them. The decision to accept the applicant as a student in care is postponed until these steps are complete.

- “No, but . . .” The Committee may feel that at this time it is not able to make a positive decision to enter into a student in care relationship with the applicant. However, it could indicate its openness to consider the request at a later time if the person is able to address the identified deficiencies and wishes to make application again.
- “No.” In some cases, a Committee may need to say no to a person. This is not a decision that can be made lightly or without considerable deliberation. But in cases where it is clear that the person does not appear to have the potential for ordained ministry, is not authentic in his or her intentions, or exhibits obvious immaturity or emotional problems, the Committee can express its caring for the person and for the Church by denying the request.

In making its decision, the Committee on the Ministry needs to keep a variety of factors before it:

- It is making a decision on behalf of the entire United Church of Christ. Its decision is one that is recognized by and honored by all of the United Church of Christ.
- It is making a decision about entering into a preparation process with the person. It is not deciding at this point to ordain the person. On the one hand, this means that its concern is not the present fitness of the person but the potential fitness of the person for ordained ministry. On the other hand, it is committing itself to provide responsible guidance and support during the period of preparation so that the person has every opportunity to develop the potential that is there.

The Committee on the Ministry communicates its decision to the applicant and the applicant's local church. When the decision is not to proceed with the person, the Committee on the Ministry should ensure that there is pastoral follow-up with and concern expressed for the person and his or her local church. When the decision is to proceed with the person, the Committee on the Ministry outlines its expectations of the person during the period of preparation. The Committee appoints an advisor for the person.

The decision to grant student in care status is reported to the Association, the Conference, the Office of General Ministries of the United Church of Christ, and the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team.

In its commitment to quality education for its students in care, the Association will need to be familiar with the educational institutions where its students are enrolled and share with these institutions its expectations about the nature of the educational experience it desires for its students in care. This may involve giving the schools feedback about their curricula and the Association's perception of the readiness for ministry of the school's graduates.

The Association should be aware that the development of United Church of Christ identity and familiarity with United Church of Christ history, polity, and practice often is not a prime concern of seminaries not related to the United Church of Christ. (See the listing of United Church of Christ-related seminaries in Appendix C in the supplemental section of this *Manual*.)

It is the practice in many Associations to present persons who have been accepted as students in care to the Association or Conference or both. This may be done as part of one of the regular meetings of these bodies. Some Associations require a vote by the Association to accept students in care on the recommendation of the Committee on the Ministry. The Association presents an in care certificate to each newly approved in care student. The Association needs to ensure ample time—three weeks—to secure the in care certificate from the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team.

STEPS 9–10

THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT IN CARE ADVISOR

Each Association needs in care advisors whom it can call on as the need arises. In care advisors, representatives of the Association and its Committee on the Ministry, maintain the personal relationship of the Church with its students preparing for ordained ministry. In care advisors provide the link between the Church and the student, embody the support of the Church for the student, provide counsel as needed by the student, and encourage the deepening of faith that will nurture and sustain the person in the years of ordained ministry. They serve as members and coaches through the process of preparing for ordination.

In care advisors include both ordained ministers who hold standing in the Association in which the student is in care and laypersons of the Association. The student's pastor is not generally considered for the role of in care advisor so that she or he is not put into a difficult position later in making her or his recommendation to the Committee on the Ministry about the person's development and fitness for ordained ministry.

The in care advisor should be active in his or her Association and be very familiar with the United Church of Christ. The in care advisor will have intimate knowledge of the requirements and expectations of the Association and the United Church of Christ in regard to their ordained ministers. The in care advisor will have a firm grasp of the Association procedures for in care and ordination.

Because the role of the in care advisor is so important, the Association has a responsibility for the wise selection of these persons and ongoing support and nurture of those filling this role. It is recommended that each Association have a training program for the orientation and support of its

in care advisors. A one-day session, which would begin the training, would include a thorough review of the provisions for in care and ordination in *The Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ* and the *Manual on Ministry*. The session would also include a review of the guidelines for in care advisors. Subsequently, all in care advisors could meet once or twice a year to share their experiences, learnings, and techniques and to identify ways to strengthen the in care system. The in care advisors could also receive the thanks of the Association during these meetings.

Following is a checklist of functions and activities of the in care advisor:

- Hold an initial meeting with the student in care soon after he or she is assigned. Review the expectations, requirements, and procedures of the in care relationship and develop an understanding of how the advisor and student will relate and work together.
- Ensure that the student in care is put on the appropriate Association and Conference mailing lists such as newsletters, annual meeting materials, mailings to clergy, and others.
- See that the student is acquainted with and provided with appropriate publications of the covenanted ministries of the United Church of Christ.
- Ensure that the student maintains active participation in the life of a local church of the United Church of Christ.
- Encourage the student to take an active part in Association and Conference activities.
- Keep in close contact with the student through occasional letters and telephone calls.
- Hold a minimum of one meeting each year with the in care student to review educational progress, growth, goals, and needs.
- Submit an annual written report to the Association Committee on the Ministry, keeping it informed about the progress and growth of the student.
- Ensure that the Committee on the Ministry and the student in care go through the necessary procedures to renew the in care relationship each year.
- Accompany the student in care each time she or he meets with the Association Committee on the Ministry.
- Contact the home church of the student in care annually to encourage its continuing support of the student and suggest ways for the local church to recognize the student and stay in close contact with him or her.
- Assist the student in care in seeking financial aid when needed.
- Provide opportunity for the student in care to raise and explore questions about faith, the Church, ministry, and so on.
- Help the student in care coordinate seminary courses with ordination requirements. This will include guidance about courses

required or recommended by the Association and about a broad, rather than too narrow, selection of courses.

- Advise the student in care regarding the preparation of the required materials to be provided to the Association Committee on the Ministry, particularly those to be provided for use during the ordination examination.
- Provide written references on behalf of the student when requested.
- Assist the student in care and the Committee on the Ministry in preparation for the ecclesiastical council—an official meeting of the Association to authorize the person for ordination.
- Provide assistance to the Association and the student in care in planning the ordination service.

In those cases where the student in care and the in care advisor live in close proximity to one another, regular and ongoing contact will be easier to maintain and involvement of the student in the life of the Association will occur more naturally. In those cases where the student is away at school, the maintenance of the relationship will need to be carefully developed and monitored. Often, it is helpful if the in care advisor makes contact with the Committee on the Ministry in the Association where the student is in school. Ways may be developed, then, for that Association to maintain contact with the student and to involve the student in the life of that Association.

STEP 11

ANNUAL REVIEW

Annually, the Association Committee on the Ministry will review its in care relationship with each of its students. Often, this will involve a meeting with the student and the student's in care advisor and possibly a representative of the local church where the student is a member to review the year and preview the next year. If distance prevents the student from meeting with the Committee, then alternative ways need to be found to conduct the annual review. Options include having the student submit a written report and having the advisor meet with the Committee to review the student's report and hear the advisor's report or arranging for a conference call with the student and Committee. In Associations with a large number of students, creative ways for conducting the annual review with a group of students at one time may be developed. Subjects to be covered in the annual review include:

- The student's educational progress. Are the proper courses being taken to prepare the student for ordination? Are the student's grades adequate? What areas of weakness are identifiable, and how can these be addressed? It may be helpful to request the student to secure and provide a transcript of the student's grades for the review.
- The student's involvement in the life of the Church. Is there participation in the life of a local church, Association, and Conference? Is a relationship being maintained with the student's home church?

- The student's relationship with the in care advisor. Is the relationship supportive and helpful? How could it be strengthened?
- Any qualifications that were noted when in care was granted.
- Any concerns or questions the student wants to share with the Committee on the Ministry.
- Progress on ordination requirements. However, the Committee should not expect a paper or engage in a pre-ordination examination at this point. This should be a time to encourage dialogue about the student's understanding of the ordination requirements and how the student sees himself or herself in relation to them.

Often, Committees on the Ministry plan an annual gathering of all their in care students and advisors to hear their stories, celebrate their preparation, and anticipate their ministries in and on behalf of the Church.

Based on its annual review, the Committee on the Ministry must decide to renew a student's in care status for another year or to discontinue it. Again, this is another checkpoint where the primary question is whether or not the person shows promise for becoming an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. Is the potential being developed so there is likelihood that ordination can be granted at the conclusion of the process?

BEGIN ORDINATION PROCEDURES

Bylaw 105 of the United Church of Christ specifies that a student in care applies for ordination not more than six months prior to the completion of theological training. While formal application cannot be made prior to this, most Associations find it necessary to begin ordination procedures with their students in care earlier than this. If a close relationship with the student in care has been maintained by the Committee on the Ministry and the student's advisor, the necessary preparatory steps, including the preparation of the required documentation, will occur naturally, leading to the formal application.

NON-TRANSFERABILITY OF IN CARE

Because in care is a relationship between the student in care and the Association, it is not something that can be transferred. If a student in care changes his or her local church membership to a local church in another Association, it is necessary for the student to make new application to the new Association to become a student in its care. The new Association may request, for informational purposes, the in care file on the person, including any counsel or recommendations from the former Association Committee on the Ministry.

STEP 12

STUDENT IN CARE STEPS 1–5

Procedures for the CANDIDATE	Procedures for the LOCAL CHURCH
<p>1 A local church member of the United Church of Christ desiring to prepare for the ordained ministry talks with his or her pastor about expectations and procedures.</p>	
<p>2 If the church member decides to proceed, application is made to the governing board of the local church (or other designated committee) for an interview and its recommendation to the Association that the person be considered for in care.</p>	
<p>3 The person provides the governing board of the local church where he or she is a member with information about desire and plans to prepare for ordained Christian ministry in the United Church of Christ. Included are statements about his or her Christian pilgrimage, biography, how the call is understood at this time, documentation of formal education, and educational plans.</p>	
<p>The person is interviewed by the governing board and pastor.</p>	<p>4 The pastor and governing board (or other designated committee) review the material and interview the person. They determine whether or not to recommend to the Association that the person be considered as a student in care.</p>
	<p>5 If application is made to the Association Committee on the Ministry, the local church provides the following documentation about the person in support of the application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The person's letter of application to be received as a student in care of the Association. b. Verification of membership in a local church of the United Church of Christ. c. Three letters of reference, including one from a pastor of that local church. d. The material provided to the governing board and pastor, revised if necessary. e. A description of the process used by the local church to interview and recommend the person.

	Procedures for the CALLING BODY	Procedures for the ASSOCIATION

STUDENT IN CARE STEPS 6–9

Procedures for the CANDIDATE	Procedures for the LOCAL CHURCH
The person meets with the Association Committee on the Ministry to be interviewed.	The pastor or local church representative may be present for the interview.
The candidate is presented to the Association in person, if possible.	
<p>9 The student in care engages in the prescribed course of study and continues to communicate with the advisor on a regular basis.</p> <p>The student in care continues to relate to his or her home church in the United Church of Christ, college or seminary, and the appointed advisor. The student keeps the Association Committee on the Ministry informed about these relationships and how they contribute to the preparation for ordained ministry. The student may relate to another local church in the location where he or she is in school or doing fieldwork.</p>	The home church relates to the student in supportive ways and provides opportunities for participation and leadership.

Procedures for the CALLING BODY	Procedures for the ASSOCIATION
	<p>6 The Association Committee on the Ministry receives the application and recommendations and reviews the material received from the local church. If it decides to proceed, it notifies the person and local church and sets a date to meet with and interview the candidate. The Committee also sends an agenda for the interview or shares this information with the applicant.</p>
	<p>7 The Association Committee on the Ministry interviews the candidate to determine (a) fitness, (b) aptitudes, (c) Christian experience, and (d) commitment as a basis for preparing for ordination. It utilizes "The Church's Expectations of its Applications for Student in Care," following this chart. If the Committee is satisfied, it receives the student into care of the Association, shares with him or her its expectations, and appoints a student in care advisor.</p>
	<p>8 The Association Committee on the Ministry arranges for the presentation of the person to the Association or Conference, which in some cases may vote to affirm the in care relationship recommended by the Committee on the Ministry. The Association presents the student in care certificate to the person. (Requests for certificates should be sent to the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team at least three weeks before they are needed.) Official notification of the action is provided to the Conference, the Office of General Ministries of the United Church of Christ, and the Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team.</p>
	<p>The student in care advisor maintains regular contact with the student in care and offers advice and counsel as the student proceeds toward ordination. The advisor consults about sources of support, including financial, and periodically reviews the course of study to make certain it will enable the student to meet ordination requirements. The student is expected to pursue a course of study leading to a bachelor's degree or its equivalent and a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent. Supplemental studies may be planned to develop competencies and skills not addressed elsewhere.</p>

STUDENT IN CARE STEPS 10–12

Procedures for the CANDIDATE	Procedures for the LOCAL CHURCH
The student in care participates in the annual review procedures of the Association Committee on the Ministry.	
12 Six months prior to the completion of theological training, the student in care formally may begin ordination procedures.	

Procedures for the CALLING BODY	Procedures for the ASSOCIATION
	<p>10 The Association Committee on the Ministry working with the advisor assures the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Training for and oversight of the advisor and review of her or his work to see that the necessary tasks are being performed. b. Regular communication with the student in care. c. Events or gatherings with the Committee, advisors, and students in care. d. The student's participation in the regular life of the Association. At times this will mean that the student participates in the life of the Association where the student is in school. e. The student's participation in the life of a local church of the United Church of Christ.
	<p>11 The Association Committee on the Ministry conducts an annual review of the student in care, including educational progress, participation in the life of a local church and Association, the advisory relationship, and progress toward meeting the ordination requirements. Based on the review, the Committee decides whether or not to continue the student in care relationship for another year.</p>
	<p>The Association instructs the student in care of its expectations and requirements in carrying out the ordination procedures.</p>

THE CHURCH'S EXPECTATIONS OF ITS APPLICANTS FOR STUDENT IN CARE

FAITH AFFIRMATIONS

- Is compelled by the gospel of Jesus Christ
- Has a sense of having been called by God and the Church to ordained ministry
- Has a sense of vocational direction
- Is committed to the mission of the Church

CHURCH LOYALTY

- Is an active member of a local church of the United Church of Christ
- Is committed to service in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ
- Is committed to active participation in the United Church of Christ beyond the local church (Association, Conference, national, etc.)
- Keeps informed about the issues and concerns facing the United Church of Christ

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Has attained, or has plans to attain, a general liberal arts education (bachelor's degree or its equivalent)
- Is attending or has plans to attend a theological seminary approved by Local Church Ministries

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Is adaptable
- Has capacity for growth and development
- Lives a Christian lifestyle
- Has empathy
- Has integrity
- Has an open and affirming style of relating to persons and ideas
- Has a sense of responsibility